# REMARKS

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On the Giving

# Vomits

IN

# FEVERS.

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## In a Letter to a Friend.

BY

*H: C:* M.R. *Car:* II.

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*EDINBURGH*,
nted by *James Watson*, for *Thomas Carruthers* in the *Parliament-Closs*. 1700.

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*SIR*,

I was ſcarce enter'd the Limits of *Scotland*, when I was by a young Nobleman entertained with the Relation of a Printed Controverſy about *Vomiting* in *Fevers*, betwixt two Phyſitians of *Edinburgh*, ( which being a Practice I have always approved, as having been tranſmitted to me, both by the Inſtructions and conſtant Example of my Father and Grand-Father, who were Men deſervedly Eminent in their Profeſſion, and could have no deſign to deceive me; and ſince confirmed by my own Experience in near 50 Years plentiful Employment ) I was not a little Curious to peruſe; and accordingly I no ſooner arrived there, than I procured their Papers. I Confeſs, I have not the good Fortune to be known to either of the Gentlemen, as I remember: But that did not Diſcourage me from putting Pen to Paper, ſince my Opinion may therefore paſs for the more Impartial, at leaſt with reſpect to their Perſons; and ſince I am not accuſtomed to conſider ſo much, who Writes, as what is Written; For *Amicus Hippocrates, Amicus Galenus, ſed magis Amica Veritas*: And this being a Sub-

ject of no ſmall Moment to Men's Lives and Healths, the beſt of Wordly Enjoyments: I conceive my ſelf Obliged not to paſs it over in Silence, but to Communicat my Thoughts, withSubmiſſion to better Judgements.

The occaſion of this Paper Warr, ſeems to be a Scandalous Report, ſuppoſed at leaſt to be induſtriouſly ſpread thro' Town and Countrey by the Ordinary or his Abetters, That Dr. *Oliphant* had Killed a Patient with a Vomit; And that giving Vomits in Fevers was an Innovation in Medecin never heard of before. Now, leaſt this ſhould affect the Drs. Reputation, he thought it neceſſary to Vindicat the Truth and Himſelf, and to mantain his ſaid Practice by Reaſon and Authoritys, as well as by a Faithful Relation of the Fact: And in order thereto he Prints a ſhort Diſcourſe to prove the Uſefulneſs of Vomiting in Fevers *&c.* which his Adverſary endeavours to Refute with his *Melius Inquirendum*, or an Anſwer to Dr. *Oliphant's* Diſcourſe, *&c.* in which it does not plainly appear, that he denys the greateſt part of the Relation, but only quarrels at ſome Trifling Omiſſions, which he therefor ſupplys in his *Melius Inquirendum*, (*viz.*

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the frightfull conſequences of the Operation of the Vomit, with the number of his Vomits of Luke-warm Water, *&c.* and of his Bleeding, Purging, and Clyſtering the Seven days before: And then proceeds to refute the Dr's. Reaſons, and to ſhew his miſtakeing, miſunderſtanding and miſapplying the ſeveral Authoritys, he qnotes, all which is loaded with a few Quibles and Reflections; and then concludes.

Now with the Ordinary's leave, I'le begin with the conſideration of the queſtion, on which he ſeems to lay the greateſt Streſs. Which is this,

Whether the giving an Ounce of *Emetick Wine*, mixed with Three Drams of Syrup of *Buckthorn*, on the the *9th.* day of a Fever, to one who had been Blooded twice Vomited thrice, Clyſtered ſeveral times, all in Seven Days time, which Vomit wrought ſo violently 8 or 10 Hours together, that the Patient was reduced to the laſt Extremity, his Hands and Feet cold, his pulſe quite gone, *Spaſmodick* contractions through the Body, be a Practice agreeable to right reaſon, the rules of Art, and the Practiſe of the beſt Phyſicians both Ancient and Modern.

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The first thing herein, which offers it self, is the Dose of the Emetick Wine, which cannot well be adjudged, unless the Preparation or *Pharmacopœia*, by which it was dispensed, were known: For I remember, there were two Eminent Apothecaries Shops in *London*, of which both the Masters are since Graduated Doctors, and of no small Esteem, and in the one of them half an Ounce was a large Dose, and in the other two Ounces was but a moderat one, tho generally, according to the common Preparation of the Infusion of *Crocus Metallorum* in *London*, an Ounce and half or two Ounces, is a fit Vomit for a Man, to be by a fourth or fifth part increas'd or lessened, according to the Strength or other Circumstances of the Patient.

The next Remark is, Whether it was proper on the 9th. day of a Fever? I confess, times in Fevers, before they were better understood, used to be Religiously observed: But of late the proper Season to give Vomits is, whenever there is an Indication for them, whether the First, Ninth, or Fifteenth Day, sooner or later, provided there is no material Contra-indication. Of this I had a late instance in this Country upon my Lord *Tullibardine*'s Page, who had

had languiſhed with a Fever about 40 days, moſt of which time he had faint Sweats, with burning Heats, little Sleep, great Ravings: The Nerves of his Tongue and of many parts of the Body frequently affected, in ſo much that he often loſt his Speech, and had no uſe of his Limbs, for Weakneſs and Trembling, beſides other *Symptoms*, as Coughs, &c. He was reduced to a Skeleton. This Gentleman in this deplorable ſtate, took about 10 or 12 Drams of Infuſion of *Crocus Mettallorum*, which wrought very kindly, and from that Minute recovered plainly to all mens ſenſe, and in leſs than 24 hours all the *Symptoms* vaniſhed: Afterwards he took 3 or 4 times the *Decoctum amarum cum ſenna*, and in a Weeks time he was able to walk abroad, and in few days enjoyed his perfect Health.

Thirdly, The Patients having been twice Blooded, Purged, and thrice Vomited with Whey or warm Water, *&c.* was not a ſufficient Argument againſt giving of Emetick Wine, if there yet remained a proper Indication for a Vomit; becauſe if the firſt, 2*d.* & 3d. Exhibition were reaſonable, becauſe there was an Indication for Vomiting, I am humbly of opinion, that as long as the ſame continued, the ſame meaſures ought

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to be purſued, and perhaps with more vigor than before.

Fourthly, Tho all this was done in ſeven days, yet, if the Nature of an acute Diſeaſe require it, not only Evacuation ought to be repeted the eight Day; but probably it was a great Omiſſion, that more had not been done in Number, Power, or both, within the firſt ſeven Days.

Fifthly, The Operation as related deſerves a place here alſo, being a Material part of the Queſtion, which ſays, that the Patient was reduced to the laſt extremity (tho by the ſequel it did but ſeem to be ſo, for the Patient is very well) that the Medicine wrought by Stool 8 or 10 Hours together, which appears to be no more than neceſſary, to expel ſuch a quantity of pernicious Humours, and to ſave his Life: But how are we certain it was the Medicine, and not a concurrent Criſis, made ſo large an Evacuation? For I have known, that a Medecin has been blamed for the like, when it would naturally have rather hindered, then provoked it. Next the Patients Hands and Feet were Cold, his Pulſe quite gone, and Spaſmadick Contradictions affected his whole Body: Theſe truly ſeem Frightful, but yet are never Dange-

Dangerous in the Operation of a Vomit: And beſide, the Dr, in *p.* 5. of his Defence, denies, they followed the Operation of the Vomit; but, in caſe they had, it muſt have been very difficult to diſtinguiſh, whether they were the Effect of the Vomit, or of the Diſtemper; they frequently attending Diſtempers, and but rarely Vomits: And I pray how can it be known, whether theſe Symptoms might not have been much worſe, if no Vomit had been taken, and whether the Patient might not then have dyed in earneſt, who now only to the Ordinary ſeem'd to be a dying? And here the Queſtion comes to be ſum'd up: Whether this be a Practice agreable to right Reaſon, the Rules of Art, and the Practice of the beſt Phyſicians both Ancient and Modern?

This indeed deſerves a ſerious Conſideration, tho, if it ſhould but agree with right Reaſon and the Rules of true Art, it is no great Matter, whether it has the Concurrence of the beſt Ancient and Modern

Phyſicians; Reaſon and Art being very ſufficient, tho' Authorities were wanting.

A few Reaſons may therefore be here added to the Conſideration of the Impartial, as

*Firſt*, May we not reaſonably believe, that neither the Doſe, nor time it was adminiſtred, did any ways prejudice the Patient, ſince not only he recovered after, but thouſands have taken larger Doſes at that, and all other times of a Fever, both without Injury and with wonderful Advantage; and poſſibly it will be no eaſy Task for the Ordinary, to produce an Inſtance of any Patient, that certainly ſuffered only by the like Doſe or time.

*Secondly*, May we not rationally ſuppoſe, that, if the previous Evacuations, being proper, had not effected the Cure, they ought to be rejected: Or that, if improper and too weak, more proper and powerful ſhould be applied, and continued, till the Indication ceas'd.

*Thirdly*, May we not fairly preſume, that

that the Continuance of the Operation 8, or 10 Hours, and the terrible Symptoms mentioned, if there were any ſuch, were rather cauſed by the Violence of the Sickneſs, then by the Vomit, becauſe ſo ſmall a Doſe rarely, if ever, works above 4 Hours, and becauſe ſuch like Symptoms frequently occur, where no Vomit has been given: And becauſe 'tis probable nothing, but the remaining Vitious Humors, put in Agitation, could produce ſuch new Symptoms, and keep the Patient ill ſo many days after; *Non Cauſa pro Cauſa* makes moſt Miſtakes.

*Fourthly*, May it ſeem unreaſonable to conclude, that ill Humors are the only Cauſe of all Fevers, as well as they are of other Diſtempers: And that, ſo long as they continue moving in any Quantity, ſo long the Patient muſt be diſordered, if not in Danger: And therefore, that they ought, by all proper and ſpeedy Methods to be expelled, till when there can be but ſmall Hopes the Fever ſhould be extinguiſhed.

*Fifthly*, May it not be conſonant to right Reaſon to think, that, if Vomits and other Evacuations are given to expel the offending Humor, being the only true end of all Medicaments, they could neither prejudice nor weaken the Patient near ſo much, as the Diſeaſe, either let alone, or trifled with.

Theſe Particulars, 'tis hoped, may ſerve to ſhew, Reaſon is not ſo much a Stranger to this Sort of Practice: Let it now appear, how much ſome Rules of Art may ſupport the ſame, by the following approved Maxims. As

*Ablata cauſa tollitur affectus. Ubi ad animi defectionem educere expedit, faciendum id quoque, ſi æger par eſſe poſſit. Obſta principiis; ſero medicina paratur. Extremis morbis extrema remedia conveniunt. Purgandum in valde acutis, ſi turgeat materia, eodem ipſo die, differre enim in talibus malum. Præſtat anceps remedium quam nullum dum natura movet, move; quo natura tendit, tende, &c.*

I muſt now go to the next Paragraph, where

where the ordinary Cenſures the Dr. for Labouring in Vain, ſince it was never denyed, that Vomits in Fevers is no Novelty: but then its ſtrange, he had not ſooner ordered one more effectual, than Whey and Luke-warm Water, which ſcarce deſerves the Name of Vomits, bringing ſeldom much more off the Stomach than themſelves, and rarely if ever the peccant Matter. Then he implys, that Antimonial Vomits murder Men, Women and Children, and that the Practitioner deſerves to be accordingly puniſhed. Truely unleſs the Ordinary hath murdered any with ſuch Vomits, I muſt be ſo uncivil, as to disbelieve his Suggeſtion; for I have given, and known given ſome Hundred Thouſands, and do not remember, that ever one of them could be juſtly taxed for having in the leaſt cauſed, or haſtned the Death of one Pateint, that muſt not certainly have died without. But this is the Misfortune, that when a Patient dies under the Cure, tho by the Ignorance

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or Neglect of a pretended cautious Physician, who prescribes plentifully comfortable Cordials, he shall seldom, if ever, be blamed, but extolled for a safe tender Hearted Doctor, *cujus contrarium*; &c. But on the other side, if it happens, that a Patient die in the hands of an honest Skilful Physician, who follows effectual Remedies, tho plainly off the Distemper, or for his being called too late, 'tis Odds, but the Wise and tatling Gossips damns him for a rash and dangerous Physician, because he directed few or no Cordials, but only Powerful Medicines, fit to combat and expel the Disease, which indeed are more uneasie to the Patient, and frightful to the Ignorant bystanders in their Operation, and less grateful to the Pallat, tho much more safe and effectual than the pleasant comfortable Cordials, so much applauded by persons of slender Understanding in such Matters.

In the 6 and 7 Pages, the Ordinary says, the Patient had been purged more, had

had not the Dr. by his Raſhneſs prevented it, and brought the Patient to ſo low a Paſs, that no Place was left for any thing, but Cordials and gentle Opiats. I am glad to find here, he could have continued Evacuations longer, and hope, for the future he'll proportion them in Number, Quantity and Power to the Diſcaſe, or elſe, tho never ſo proper, he'll certainly faill of Succeſs, as the Sequel proved, his Vomits of Whey did. But further, if the Diſeaſe be ſtill rampant, tho the Patient was very low, yet was there more room for Evacuation, than Opiats and Cordials, to expel the Cauſe of the Diſeaſe, and whenever that ſhall be removed, a little Milk Pottage or Gruel would have procured reſt and Strength ſooner, than either Opiats or Cordials: For that being taken away, which obſtructed Sleep and Strength, Nature without other help, will very well perform her own Duty.

Reaſons are not wanting to prove every

very Aſſertion, but that it would ſwell this Letter beyond the due Limits, and it's hoped, that what is not proved, is ſo ſelf evident, that 'twould be ſuperfluous to add any further.

In the ſame *7th* Page, after an Exception at a triple Doſe in ſtead of a quadruple, he affirms that every Phyſician, acquainted with *Emeticks*, knows, that two Drams with a little *Oxymell* will evacuat conſiderably: If he means five or ſix Ounces of *Oxymel* by that little, I believe it may, but otherways I never heard of leſs than an Ounce of the ſaid Wine, was ever given to a grown Man, and ſeldom ſo little, except in the Shop abovementioned.

It is a probability next a Proof, that, if ſo much of the peccant Matter had not been carried off with the Dr's *Antimonial Vomit*, the Patient, who was after ſo bad with the Remainder of the Diſeaſe, could never have ſubſiſted under the Burthen of the whole, therefore the Dr's Conjecture does not ſeem to be

be so Groundless: The Reason offered by the Ordinary, can never support his Assertion: For, where Nature proves too strong for the Fever, and throws all the vitious Humours out by Vomit, Sweat, or otherways: The Patient certainly recovers, not only without Vomits, but without Physitian, or Medicines; And of this there are Multitudes of Instances in all Ages: But yet, even in these cases where Nature is thus Victorious; The Skilful Assistance, according to Natures indication of an Honest Physitian may be very Convenient to render the Cure more certain and speedy, tho his principal Duty be to rescue those out of the Jaws of Death, for whose Nature, the Disease would else have been too powerful.

In Page 8, he allows Vomits in Fevers, if administred by wary and skilful Physicians, to which I readily consent, for no other ought to be admitted to Practise, and in such hands edge Tools are better then blunt ones; Fooles and Knaves ought not to prophane so sacred a profession. But what provision is made for a fair Trial of Physicians abilities: The University seems not the most fit; for they rather prepare them to be made, than make them Physicians. Physicians Colledges wherever they be constituted, are Partys; and Apothecarys are too much byassed by their

intereſts to ſuch Drs. as Write longeſt Bills, and can Spin out a Cure from a Week to above a Month, and the Vulgar tho moſt concerned, are the leaſt capable common fame, for the moſt part a Lyar and their own Paſſions and Affections always blinding their judgements, if they have any.

In the ſame Paragraph the Ordinary promiſes, what I do not find he hath yet performed, and what I would gladly ſee, *viz.* that the taking the Vomit had almoſt killed the Patient, when it ſeems rather to have been the Diſeaſe, that had almoſt killed him, and in all probability certainly would have done it, had he not taken the Vomit, *But non cauſa pro cauſa makes all or moſt miſtakes in the World.*

In the laſt Paragraph of the ſame Page, the Ordinary gives an account, that at firſt the Vomit wrought pretty well both Upwards and Downwards, and then the Dr. goes off, but a little after the Patient began to purge ſo violently. *&c.* Now a good Homward perſon might have thence concluded, and it may be more truly that after the Operation of the Vomit was quite finiſhed, Nature, being in part thereby relieved, rallyed her ſcattered Spirits to make a Critical Evacuation of the remainder; for, he ſays, the Patient began again to purge; And that all the Symptomes then

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ppearing were no other, but what every xperienced Phyſician knows to be very ſual in ſuch Evacuations of like Matter, where only the Criſis, without any Medicine whatſoever, proves *Naturam Medicatricem*.

What the Doctor preſcribed, in concert with an other Phyſician, to help to Compoſe, and to Suppreſs Vapours, was not amiſs; ſince Nature, without ſome Intervals of Reſt, is unable to bear the Fatigue of diſcharging all the preternatural Humors at once.

Page 9th. It is a little wonderful, the Ordinary at his Return ſhould be ſurprized at ſo great a Change in 48 Hours, when in acute Diſtempers all Practitioners, how mean ſoever, cannot but know, there may be much greater in 12 Hours time: And the Abatement of the Fever, till all the Morbifick Matter was ſpent, he ought not to have expected; for oftimes the laſt Fit of an Intermitting Fever, when moſt of the *Saburra* is expell'd, ſeems to be the moſt violent: Therefore there was more reaſon for him to be pleaſed, that it continued in order to expel by the Pores, what ſtill remained, which ſeemed to be their joint Opinion: For, if they had not thought, there had ſtill remained ſome ill Humors, it had been a great cruelty to have tormented a weak Patient with bliſtering Plaſters, in order to draw them out.

Page

In *Page* 10*th*, The Ordinary takes notice That on *Saturday*, being the 6*th* day after he had taken the Vomit, the Symptoms began gradually to decline, which was reasonable to be expected, Nature having then finished the Expulsion of such peccant Matter, as still remained after the Operation of the Vomit.

In Page 11*th*. there is this Passage: Whose Temper and Constitution he was not in the least acquainted with, and who had undergone so many Evacuations before, since there could be no hazard of giving a less Dose: As if forsooth, in an acute Disease, which requires the speedy Assistance of the Physician, nothing should be done by him, under Pretence of not being acquainted with the Constitution of the Patient, and so let slip the Opportunity of saving his Life: Neither do I agree to his Opinion, that there is no hazard in giving a less Dose, for every Cure, which comes short of the Disease, must be very hazardous, by subjecting the Patient to its Power with such small Assistance; Diseases being ever dangerous, when Remedies are rarely so, unless very unskilfully administred.

Page 12*th*. he is pleased to call Weakness a Contra-Indication to Evacuation, which is certainly true, where there is no Diseased Matter to be Evacuated: But, where there

there is, nothing can ſtrengthen ſuch weak Patients ſo much, as the removing that Matter, which at firſt cauſed it, and, if continued, will certainly increaſe it.

I can as little approve his Commendation of ſuch a wary Phyſician, who is backward to preſcribe ſtrong Evacuations, eſpecially by Vomit; for, when ſtrong Medicines are neceſſary, it is as great a Fault to omit them, as to give them, where they are certainly not wanted: But, if he means ſuch ſtrong Medicines, or large Doſes, as no Man of Senſe ever gave, I muſt agree with him, that its a dangerous Practice to blow up a Houſe to diſlodge an Enemy, which, tho it be a frequent Military Practice, ſeems here but an improper Simile. To proportion juſtly the Strength and Doſe of a Medicine to the Power of a Diſeaſe, and to triffle away no time with too gentle Methods, is not only the Duty of a Phyſician, but an evident Demonſtration of his great Skill and Judgment; as the contrary would be of his Weakneſs.

The difficult Problem left undetermined in the 13*th*. Page, whether theſe Evacuations ſhould precede or follow Blooding, I think may be ſolved by common Senſe and frequent Practice, without the help of *Euclid*'s Elements; for every Houſe-Wife can tell, that, when an inner and outer

Room

Room are to be made clean, it's beſt beginning with the inner; for, if you ſhould firſt clean the outer Room, you cannot avoid fouling it again, when you go about cleaning the inner.

Now, If Vomits and Purges cleanſe the *Primæ viæ*, whence the Blood is ſupplyed, as none denys, its fitter to begin there, leſt, after the Blood is leſſened in quantity, it ſhould be again defiled by the Supplies it muſt receive from the *Primæ viæ*.

Page 14, The Ordinary affirms, that the Dr: would not have failed to have killed outright, if either the Doſe had been a little ſtronger, or the Patient a little weaker, which was to ſail too near the Wind. Such like Suppoſals may be made in all Caſes, where Malice or Friendſhip is concerned, which may be as eaſily anſwered, that the Dr. judging exactly his Patients Strength, ſo proportioned the Doſe of the Emetick as to be neither too ſtrong for his Patient, nor too weak for his Fever: And thus by ſailing ſo near the Wind, a Prize may be taken, which might elſe eſcape.

Tho I had reſolved not to meddle with the Authorities, yet I could not let them ſlip without this remark, that, if theſe Authors had never ſeen, or had like Occaſion to make ſuch Reflections, as our modern Practitioners may have had, Poſterity muſt

muſt be condemned never to grow Wiſer: Whatever was well ſaid or obſerved by theſe Authors, was only ſo far ſo, as conſiſted with right Reaſon and Experience: And, if both the ſame be the Guides of this preſent Age, I know not, why a wiſe and true Saying or Obſervation of this preſent Generation, may not be as authentick as of any of the former.

Page 17 and 18, The ordinary drawing towards a Concluſion affirms, that not only Phyſicians, but all Men in their right Wits, muſt condemn a Practice, that reduceth Men to the laſt Extremity, and brings them to the brink of the Grave, eſpecially when there is no neceſſity: This ſurely may be granted by all Men, but hath little regard to the Caſe in hand: Where its manifeſt, it was not the Dr's Practice, but the Diſeaſe reduced the Patient to this Extremity, and it was ſo far from being unneceſſary, that without it, in all Probability, the *Patient* muſt moſt certainly have died; *but there is the Miſchief of* non Cauſa pro Cauſa.

In Page 19, The Ordinary ſeems to grant all that is deſired, (*viz.*) That Fevers both with and without Vomits and other Evacuations may be cured, reſtraining Antimonial Vomits only to greater circumſpection, and this he ſupports with *Rive-*

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*rius* his Opinion; but, if none but skilful and circumspect Persons were permitted to practice, as no other ought, then sharp Knives and Swords ought not to be neglected, Skilful Persons knowing ful well how to use them to the best purpose.

This in brief is faithfully my Opinion, as it naturally arises from the several Tracts published in this Case: And if any person whatsoever, perusing this Letter, will please to shew me the mistakes by right Reason and fair Experiments: I shall be so far from being offended, that I will both confess my Error, and acknowledge my Obligation to him: For I can never think my self too Old, nor too Wise, to learn, tho I presume I shall never *jurare in verba Magistri*, Authorities unless agreeable to common Sense and Matter of Fact tho never so highly applauded by others have but a very slender Influence on my Mind, which notwithstanding is ever readily submitted to right Reason, tho without any Authority.

I fear by this time I may have tyred your Patience with my long Scroll; I shall therefore conclude, leaving the further Consideration of the Authorities to such as have leisure, and a mind to compare both sides.

FINIS.

BL